

# THE WOODY GUTHRIE NEWSLETTER



No. 1

April 1960

This is the first issue of THE WOODY GUTHRIE NEWSLETTER, to be published from time to time by THE GUTHRIE CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND. Over the past years we have received many letters and inquiries about Woody. These letters are not only from many parts of our country, but a huge flow of letters from England and the continent. We are delighted (and of course Woody is too) that so many people want to know how Woody is, ask for his songs, reprint his material and urge us to bring out more material written by Woody.

For the past two and half years Woody has been a patient at the New Jersey State Hospital in Greystone Park, N.J. Thanks to the wonderful effort of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Gleason of East Orange, N.J. Woody has a home away from the hospital. The Gleason's pick him up and take him to their home every week-end where he has a chance to meet his friends who come from New York, and from time to time, the Gleason's bring Woody into New York. The Trust Fund is indeed grateful and appreciative to Mr. & Mrs. Gleason.

It is the purpose of this Newsletter to tell you about Woody, to reprint his songs and other writings, to advise you of any new publications and records containing Woody's material. We feel that Woody Guthrie has become an integral part and a great contributor to American culture. The songs of Woody Guthrie will long remain part of American folk music for many years to come. The writings of Woody, his poems, essays, books and letters will take their place in American literature.

When we told Woody we were getting out this Newsletter he was delighted, and gave us suggestions, and agreed to contribute comments and suggestions for material. We are sure that many friends and admirers of Woody Guthrie will welcome this first issue.

THE GUTHRIE CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND  
Lou Gordon, Harold Leventhal, Pete Seeger  
Trustees

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## WHAT AND WHERE WITH WOODY By Bob and Sidsel Gleason

Four years may not seem like a long time, but it's probably the longest time Woody ever spent in one place since he learned to walk. There was always another river to cross or mountain to see--acres of wheat, lands of corn, cotton, tobacco fields, vineyards. Most of all there were people. The more Woody traveled the more he realized there were more and still more places he had to see, people he had to sing to, songs he had to write. He traveled east, west, north and south, picking his guitar or mandolin, sawing out wild fiddle tunes, singing the music of the people and for the people to the people and with the people, his people, the folks who made up the world. Today Woody is quite well restricted in his activity and is never more than a few hours from the hospital, where he's fighting his battle with Huntington's Chorea.

Last May we, Bob and Sid Gleason, heard George Lorrie's Grand Concert of Folk Music the evening Millard Lampell told us The Woody Guthrie Story. Millard Lampell asked the listeners to write. We did and our letter was answered for Woody by Barbara June Appelman. The following week we drove to the hospital to visit the little man of great stature. This started our WHAT AND WHERE WITH WOODY. We decided to have him at home with us as our guest on weekends so it would be easier for his friends to visit him. We live about half way between New York City and Greystone Park. Barbejune visited each



weekend very faithfully. We'd "Take Woody Riding In The Car" or Barbejune might take Woody to a movie. Soon the weather became warm enough for picnics.

It was at one of our picnics with Woody that we met Arlo, Joady and Nora Lee, Woody's children, and their mother, Marjorie Mazia Guthrie. Here, too, we heard Arlo sing his own version "This Land." Look out, everyone. There's another Guthrie coming up. Arlo, the eldest of the three, will soon be thirteen years of age, and already he's playing, writing and singing in the Guthrie tradition. He, too, like his father writes songs of protest. Elsewhere in this Newsletter you'll find the words to one of Arlo's parodies on Woody's work.

Fathers Day was a happy day. Pete Seeger, Margie and the kids, and a few other folks helped Barbejune and us to entertain Woody. Pete, Arlo and Barbejune played and sang for Woody--Pete, banjo; Arlo, guitar; Barbejune, mountain dulcimer.

Spring slipped into July, and our weekends continued, and we all had great fun. Barbejune and Ralph Rinzler visited Woody just before Barbejune sailed for England and then Ralph helped us to entertain Woody. Ralph would take Woody on a Saturday and we on a Sunday or vice versa. It was on one of these weekends that Woody was taken for a ride in a light airplane at Basking Ridge, N.J. Woody was delighted and quite frequently talks at length about the airplane ride Ralph took him on. Thanks to Ralph, Woody had many happy days that couldn't have been possible without his help. Imagine our surprise when, after having Woody with us on a Saturday, we found him in Washington Square the next day. Again--thanks to Ralph. Many people left their groups to drift to Woody and play and sing for him. This was Woody's first visit to Washington Square in about five years, and he found a warm welcome from his friends.

Oscar Brand invited us to visit him on August 9, to be his guest. Woody still talks of this visit. Rubyann had presented the Brand family with a son, Eric David Brand, a short while before we arrived. Whenever we play Oscar's records for Woody to hear, which is frequently, Woody reminds us that we "were at Oscar's when Eric was born."

Lionel Kilberg, that irreplaceable Shanty Boy, announced to us one day that he was planning a get together at his loft and that he'd like to have Woody there. We were there and Woody had a ball. Many of Woody's friends spent the afternoon singing Woody's songs and renewing old and making new friendships. This was the first of a number of "sings" at Lionel's.

We give special thanks to Lionel here for all the help he's been. Whenever we've needed an idea on how to entertain Woody, Lionel has given a lion's share in Woody's behalf. Whenever we've been stuck without transportation for Woody--the two old automobiles we've had got sick occasional--Lionel had dropped everything to help us.

Robert Smith of the Virginia Pilot in Norfolk, Virginia visited Woody and talked with him about an article he's writing about Woody and his music. This article has developed into articles that are being accepted for publication, and we hope soon to be able to pass that word on to Woody's friends when and where these articles will appear. Bob Shelton of the New York Times and Don Lazere, freelance writer, also have articles "in the fire." And so August went by with more friendship bonded by music.

September was approaching and the rains were falling when we drove to Beacon to visit the Seegers. Pete, Toshi, and family and friends gave Woody a wonderful day. We all played and sang with the god, Thunder, and the devil, Lightning, fighting their never-ending battle. With the rains falling the music went on. It was a sad moment when we had to start back, but again the warmth of friendship and music that we'd soaked up during the day made our trip back to the hospital through torrential rains a pleasant one. Thanks, Pete, Toshi, and all, for taking time from your very busy schedules to give Woody pleasure.

The Sunday before labor day Lionel Kilberg, Ernie Marrs, and we Gleasons started the day with Woody. Later, by previous arrangement, Jack and June Elliott surprised Woody by dropping in supposedly out of nowhere. Woody was delighted and he and Jack talked and sang together for hours, reliving old times. Another busy day with much music and great fellowship. Just as in days gone by, Jack and Woody would pick a song and continue for "hours" making up new verses as they went along.



They'd occasionally take time out to toast each other with mugs of cold root beer.

September led into October. Harold Leventhal visited as did Margie and the kids and Lionel and Ed Badeaux. One bright Sunday we piled Woody in the car with Margie and the kids and drove to High Point, N.J. Woody loved the trip and thoroughly enjoyed looking out over New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania with his kids.

November crept up and the singers left "the Square." Once again we gathered at Lionel's Loft where we were entertained by Paul Cadwell, Al Bluhm, and others.

Thanksgiving came along and two of Woody's fans from Portland, Oregon spent the day with us. Listening to Bill Ryan and Mel Lyman tell of their travels by thumb and rod from Portland to New York Woody relived many of his own travels. We all stuffed ourselves quite traditionally, and Woody again had a good day.

December, and the Sunday before Christmas Pete Seeger dropped by with Mika, Penny, Ed Badeaux and Mide, a friend. What fun! We'll never forget Pete's shipping spree nor his culinary artistry in the form of wonderful strawberry shortcake.

Christmas came upon us and Pat Baxter, a Woody fan and friend from London, Bill Ryan, the Gleasons and Terri--along with Woody--were well remembered with cards, letters and gifts, for which we all thank our many friends and friends of Woody's.

The new year, 1960, is upon us. What will it hold for America and her people, for the world as a whole.

So far the new year has brought more mail for Woody and more visits from his friends, more visits to Lionel's loft, more Sundays just relaxing and listening to tapes and records. (All our Sundays with Woody aren't hectic ones. We'll quite frequently just listen to and talk about good folk music and the artists who perform as well as the writers who write.)

Oscar Brand, wonderful Oscar, saw to it that Woody attended the Cooper Union concert. And thanks from Woody, Oscar, for letting people know he was there, even though it was impossible for him to perform. He revelled in his applause, a well-deserved applause. Woody enjoyed the concert and is looking forward to more.

The Stephensons, Sing and Hally Wood, invited a few of their friends and Woody's for an afternoon at their apartment in New York. Woody once again saw Alan Lomax, Bill Doerflinger, Jerry Silverman, Milton Pettenberg, Irwin Silber, Irwin Silver, Robert Hortle, John Cohen. Another wonderful day, and we're all looking forward to a "return engagement."

During February Woody was visited by the Lutsky's and friends, Margie and the kids, Al Addeo, and Kees t'Hart from Holland. Arlo taught Kees one of Woody's children's songs. John Cohen spent a weekend with us to help entertain Woody.

Here it is, March, and as we go to press, we're looking forward to more and more opportunities to entertain Woody. Woody has now become one of our family and calls this "home." We used to love and admire Woody, the folksinger, songwriter, balladeer, novelist, poet. During the past year we have grown more and more to love and admire Woody, the man.

We, the Gleasons, want to thank the Trustees of the "Children's Fund" for their help in making it possible to have Woody with us these many weekends. Without their support and assistance it would be next to impossible.

Woody asked us to thank his many friends for their letters and cards, and for the records and tapes loaned to us for Woody's enjoyment. Thanks, too, for the many cards and gifts at Christmas from fans and friends all over the world.

Special thanks to: Oscar Brand, Barbara June Appelman, Lionel Kilberg, Ernie Marrs, Alan Lomax, John Wisdom, Pat Baxter, The Seeger family, Jack and June Elliott, Harold Leventhal, Roger Sprung, Irwin Lutsky, Kossoy Sisters, New Lost City Ramblers, The Shanty Boys, Bill Ryan, Janet Williams and her pupils, Freddy and Ellen, Andy Irvine from Woody personally, and Norman Wersan.



OUT OF THE MAIL BAG

Day by day the mail increases. With each letter comes a personal glimpse of the writer. First graders to grandmothers, people who play and sing, people who are listeners, school teachers, butchers, nurses, doctors, students, song writers, entertainers, actors, journalists, from all parts of the U.S.A., England, Canada Scotland and Israel, are the people who write to Woody Guthrie.

There isn't a letter but that the writer hasn't found enjoyment in Woody's songs. Many ask for information that Woody and I do our best to answer. Most correspondents send a snapshot to add to the ever-growing album of Woody's friends, an album Woody enjoys very much. Nearly everyone asks, "Where can I get Bound For Glory?" Unfortunately, Bound For Glory is out of print and very difficult to obtain. Effort is being made, however, to have it republished. "Are there any song books available of Woody's songs?" "Where can we buy records of Woody's songs?" "How did Woody play the mouth harp?" These are representative questions that keep flowing in.

A young mother in California tells how her children are growing up with Woody's children's songs.

"Woody Guthrie is synonymous with American Folk Music," writes Noel Borer of England

Bob Amadatsu of Winnipeg, Canada remarked, "When I heard Woody's voice on tape I could hardly believe my ears. I thought he was dead."

"Dear Woody Guthrie--We like your songs. We hope you get better. We are First grade children in the Edison School," was painstakingly printed and signed by 15 of Mrs. Chell's Students. Fair Lawn, N. J.

"Woody's songs mean a great deal to the migrant workers. They hear them and take hope." Harold Riley, San Francisco.

"Ever since I became interested in folk music I've been an admirer of your singing. Your records have been few and far between in this country and I've sent to the U.S.A. for most of your recordings." -- Jim Marshall, Sussex, England.

Thirteen year old Noel Stutland of Levittown, Pennsylvania, is one of the many youngsters who write and say they are learning folk guitar and like Woody's style.

Patricia "Pat" Baxter, who came from London, wrote, "It was one of the main reasons I came to America. I just wanted to meet you after hearing and singing your songs."--Boston, Massachusetts.

"Every time I sing a song of yours, I know why they are so moving. They are a piece of your heart. They aren't like any of the sissified stuff on the Hit Parade. They are a living, breathing part of you."-- Dick Stone, Great Neck, Long Island, N.Y.

"Thank you not only for myself, but for 26 first graders who eagerly await the time of the day when 'Woody sings to us,'--Rollie Abkowitz, Allen Road School, N. Syracuse, N.Y.

To all who have written, sent Christmas cards and gifts, to all who have sent tapes of chat and music, Woody sez, "Thank you."

To all of Woody's many friends who have brought an extra ray of sunshine to us through their letters and song we, Bob and Sid, thank you.

We and Woody would like to take this opportunity to ask that mail be sent as follows:

Personal letters should be addressed to Woody Guthrie, C.B. 16  
New Jersey State Hospital, Greystone Park, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Packages, records, tapes and the like for Woody's enjoyment should be addressed to Woody Guthrie, c/o Gleason, 182 North Arlington Avenue, East Orange, New Jersey, U.S.A.

We make this request because a few packages have been lost in the shuffle at the hospital.



WOODY STILL SEZ

"What the world needs to do is hurry up and do it."

John Steinbeck wrote, "He (Woody) is just a voice and a guitar." In this column we shall endeavor to show another side of Woody, the Woody who leaps at us from the pages and pages of notebooks, diaries, scraps of paper, that have been stored away in trunks and boxes and are in the possession of Margie Mazia Guthrie. We'll just quote Woody and omit our own comments, which would only tend to detract from what Woody Still Sez.

"I come with a new thought not depending on you to help me as a friend or as an enemy. You help me by being either one.

"Clock"

Every night about eight o'clock  
I wind the stem of my pocket clock  
And when I look at the crystal glass  
I see a lot of faces pass  
Of you I knew  
And you I know  
You that are coming and you to go  
Faces of you I knew  
And you I know.

"The whole world is like one person fighting to grow.

"I had much rather you would call me a recorder than a creator.

"The sea as well as the weather always reflects the mood of the looker."

Take it easy, but take it,

WWG

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#### The Math Test

I've sung this song but I'll sing it again  
Of the teachers I've met in the wild dusty schools  
In a month called April, a shower in May  
And here's what all of the people here say, singing,

So Long, it's been good to know ya,  
So Long, it's been good to know ya,  
So Long, it's been good to know ya,  
It's a long time since I've been home  
And I've got to be drifting along.

Well, we all had a math test we all ran away,  
But the teacher she caught us the very next day  
She put us in jail, it was the classroom  
And she got so mad she hit us with a broom

CHORUS

Me and my friend were running all day  
But there stood the teacher right in the way  
We turned around and what did we see  
But a big fat mean principal lookin' at me.

CHORUS

We kept on running and we got away  
We got to Oklahoma the very next day  
When we got to school what did we see  
But a big old math test lookin' out way.

Arlo Guthrie



Last page:

"The Woody Guthrie Newsletter" is published by The Guthrie Children's Trust Fund, a legal Fund which holds all rights to the published and unpublished works of Woody Guthrie, for the benefit of the children of Woody Guthrie as named in the legal instrument starting the Fund. The Fund is administered by three Trustees, Lou Gordon, Harold Leventhal and Pete Seeger. Harold Leventhal acts as administering Trustee and all correspondence related to the Fund should be addressed to Harold Leventhal 200 West 57th Street, New York 19, N.Y.

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The following letter is submitted to our readers for their interest:

(copy)

THE NEW JERSEY STATE HOSPITAL  
Greystone Park

March 11, 1960

Re: Woodrow Wilson

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Woodrow Wilson Guthrie, known as "Woodie Guthrie", has been a patient at Greystone Park since May 1956.

He was admitted for and is being at present treated for Huntington's Chorea. This is an illness in which the patient has generalized tremors and shakes and the exact cause of this illness is unknown. There is one thing that we do know and that is that it is not caused by any infectious organism or agent.

Very truly yours,

/s/ E. Kessler

Edward I. Kessler, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.I.C.S.  
Physician in Charge

EIK:JL

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THE WOODY GUTHRIE NEWSLETTER: Editors Robert & Sidsel Gleason  
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